Conducting an Action Research Project requires the researcher to ask many questions not only of the subjects within the study but of themselves to make sure that they are not allowing their own personal biases to alter the data. There are many different ways to collect data used by action researchers. Each method has its own pros and cons depending on the researcher’s intents.

Data Collection Tools

PROS CONS

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| * Observation is a good tool to help the researcher step away from the issue and view it with a critical eye. * Anecdotal Records help to record factual dated incidents that help to identify progression. * Checklists are structured observational instruments that help to keep the observer focused. * Rating Scales are helpful in observing social and personal development * Interviewing gives the researcher the chance to hear the perspective and opinion of the student. * Questionnaires are a fast, easy way to get information. They can be given using a numbered scale for easy trend analysis. * Attitude Scales are designed to measure the strength of an attitude or opinion that might help to determine underlying beliefs. * Student Artifacts are a noninvasive way of gaining information about participants. | * Observations are never neutral in human beings. Due to personal biases it is necessary to record and reflect on our observations. * Anecdotal Records can be very time consuming and may lose accuracy if not recorded immediately. * Checklists may lose some of their validity if they are pre-prepared by an outside party who is personally involved with the study. May exclude details that are pertinent to the entire picture. * Rating Scales may restrict the subject to a particular category. They must be accurately worded to avoid biases and must be kept short. * Interviewing can be a very lengthy process and is seen as a bit invasive at times. * Participants are not always very honest when completing questionnaires. * Some subjects may just choose uncertain to avoid addressing the issues. This may result in an unreliable finding. * Student artifacts may be subject to the researcher’s interpretation. |